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STATE FOR INL/LP BROWN, BOZZOLO, WHA/CAR FOR TILGHMAN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY, EXPECT FEW  
MAJOR POLICY CHANGES UNDER NEW JLP LEADERSHIP

Classified By: ChargQ James T. Heg for reasons 1.4(b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On September 19, NAS Director met with Anne-Marie Barnes, Senior Advisor on Policy to Minister of National Security Derrick Smith. Despite her earlier indications that she would not serve under a Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) lead Ministry, Ms. Barnes appears well-entrenched in her position and has no immediate plans to resign. Based upon her early briefings to Minister Smith, Ms. Barnes seems confident than many key U.S. priorities such as the Strategic Review of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), continued cooperation with U.S. law enforcement, and efforts to combat corruption, particularly within the JCF will remain near the top of the Ministry's list. The only initiative that seems likely to fall by the wayside is the National Investigative Intelligence Agency. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Anne-Marie Barnes was brought on in late 2006 by the former Minister of National Security as a Senior Advisor on Policy. Not at all like a "civil servant" in temperament, Ms. Barnes can be a bit abrupt at times, which has earned her the enmity of Ministry staff, many of whom contacted the new Minister to request her dismissal. Although direct, we find Ms. Barnes to be one of the more open members of the Ministry's Senior staff, one willing to let you know when the Minister disagrees with a U.S. position, and capable of clearly outlining Jamaica's position on key issues. Prior to the election, Ms. Barnes had indicated that she did not want to serve in a JLP-led Ministry. During our meeting however, she explained that after briefing the new minister, she realized that she would be comfortable working for him. Ms. Barnes also shared her concern that any leave-taking would be viewed as a political statement, that could impact not only on her future employment prospects, but could also have a negative effect on her husband, Assistant Commissioner Karl Williams, former head of the Narcotics Police, who has recently returned to Jamaica from the U.S. Minister Smith told her of the calls he received from other staff members complaining about Ms. Barnes "attitude." For the moment however, he seems as content to keep her on his staff as she is to stay.

¶3. (C) During the meeting Ms. Barnes gave the NAS Director a synopsis of the new Minister's early priorities. Although the Minister's party (JLP) has come to power after 18 years in Jamaica's political wilderness, thankfully, the new Minister has chosen to keep what were regarded as key U.S. and UK priorities near the top of the Ministry's to do list. They are:

-- Strategic Review of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF): This effort, began by former Minister of National Security, Peter Phillips, has brought together U.S., UK, Canadian and South African Policing/Security experts, who are currently working with the nascent Jamaican Police Civilian Oversight

Authority, to review the operational capacity and personnel system of the JCF. As this review comes on the heels of at least two other "Strategic Reviews" where nothing has happened, thus far both the U.S. and UK have taken a hands off approach with respect to providing funding. During his first week in office, Minister Smith agreed that this review should continue and he intends to use the report from the Strategic Review Panel as the basis for recommended changes in the JCF's structure and approach. If Smith will indeed force positive change in the JCF, we should support this effort.

-- Continued Cooperation with U.S. law Enforcement: Prime Minister Golding's and Minister Smith's public statements regarding the need to continue and strengthen cooperation with the U.S. were echoed during our meeting with Ms. Barnes. As we deepen our relationship with Smith, we will continue to push for his cooperation on international extradition, information/evidence sharing, and better coordination/response from the JCF and Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) on counter narcotics operations.

-- Anti-Corruption: As part of his campaign, Prime Minister Golding promised to attack public corruption. The JLP has chosen to take a different tack than former Minister Phillips, announcing its plan to create a "Special Prosecutor" to investigate public corruption. Phillip's vision was to create a National Investigative/Intelligence Agency, which would have anti-corruption efforts as one of its key mandates. Phillip's attempts in June, to rush through legislation to authorize the NIIA's inception was a legislative train wreck. As both he and Ms. Barnes expended a lot of political capital on this project, her disappointment that Minister Smith is uninterested in continuing the project is understandable. The NIIA was a key priority for the UK, so it remains to be seen if the High Commission will attempt to resurrect it.

14. (C) On September 26, the Ambassador will have her first meeting with Minister Smith. She plans to use this meeting not only as an opportunity to open up our conversation with the new Minister on U.S.- Jamaica cooperation, but also to sign our annual Letter of Agreement to secure NAS funding for 2008.

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